

The West Africa Water Initiative



Ensuring access to clean water and adequate sanitation is an essential component in sustainable, long-term development.



Adequate water supply enhances income generation by allowing people to spend less time securing potable water, and more time on productive livelihoods.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) formally endorsed “partnerships” as a model for action. Organizations around the world are strengthening existing alliances, and fostering new collaborations to make progress on achieving WSSD and Millennium Declaration goals. As part of the global movement towards partnership, the 41 million dollar West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) was created. Inspired by the vision of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, this public-private partnership grew from years of experience with World Vision and other international nongovernmental partners to provide rural water and sanitation as the entry point for community development. The initiative is currently engaged in water supply, sanitation, hygiene, and integrated water resources management activities in three countries: Ghana, Mali and Niger.

A Partnership is Born

The “West Africa Water Initiative” was launched in 2002 to maximize the impact of water-related investments by both private and public actors, targeting interventions on highly vulnerable rural and peri-urban populations in the developing world. In its initial phase, the alliance invests in small-scale potable water supply and sanitation activities in Ghana, Mali, and Niger, as the entry point for an integrated approach to water resources management. Collaboration with other organizations creates programmatic synergy and accesses the complementary strengths of a number of affiliated partners. The initial budget from all partners is more than 41 million dollars for six years.

The impact of this initiative will be significant, and result in increased access to services, improved health and welfare, and more sustainable management of water resources for hundreds of thousands of people. In particular, it will support U.S. efforts to “halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.” In addition, WAWI hopes to foster a new and potentially replicable model of partnership and institutional synergy that ensures technical excellence, programmatic innovation, and long-term financial, social and environmental sustainability in water resources management.

The USAID Water Team

[www.usaid.gov/our_work/
environment/water/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/water/index.html)
www.sdp.gov



WAWI Partners

The current members of the Alliance represent a broad spectrum of institutional types, including a private foundation, a bilateral donor, international NGOs, universities, a public international organization, and a private for-profit sector industry association. All of these organizations have a broad international reach. WAWI partners are:

- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development
- Desert Research Institute
- Helen Keller International
- International Trachoma Initiative
- Lions Clubs International
- United Nations Foundation
- UNICEF
- USAID
- WaterAid
- Winrock International
- World Chlorine Council
- World Vision

Many other organizations are also associated with the Initiative, including the Carter Center/Global 2000, and USAID implementing organizations such as Associates in Rural Development, Inc.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has committed 17.5 million dollars of its resources over six years to this new alliance. USAID's investment commitment currently reaches about 5 million dollars to be spent over three years. The World Chlorine Council (a private sector industry association) will contribute a product donation valued at \$300,000. Other partners bring significant matches of their own resources to the table, totaling 18.4 million dollars.

The partnership has a geographic focus on West Africa in its initial phase, specifically in Ghana, Mali, and Niger. Alliance activities in all three countries will expand on the Hilton/World Vision program already in place in Ghana, including building on current efforts to prevent and control trachoma and guinea worm. The full range of activities that will be undertaken by all partners includes: well drilling and rehabilitation, hand and solar pump installation, alternative water source development, construction of latrines, household and school based sanitation and hygiene education, community mobilization and governance, hydrogeological analysis, capacity building, and policy development.

USAID Focus Areas

USAID support is directed to strengthening the Integrated Water Resources Management scope of the activities, embedding potable water activities in a broader, cross-sectoral framework. Specifically, USAID focuses on four areas of intervention: Livelihoods and Income Generation, Governance and the Enabling Environment, Information Management, and Gender Mainstreaming. Investments will focus on the "software" side of the effort, e.g., institutional strengthening, capacity building, information management, stakeholder participation, water policy reform, and financial sustainability, as well as targeted on-the-ground technical support. Through its interventions, the Agency hopes to have a catalytic role in WAWI as a whole, expanding the areas of activity and long-term approach of all partners in line with the principles of integrated water resources management.

In addition to its financial and technical support, the USAID/Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade/Water Team has supported partnership consolidation through efforts in communications, development of an initial Memorandum of Understanding, technical analysis and capacity building on cross-cutting issues, and resource mobilization. USAID also draws on its extensive relationships in the international water community to build linkages with other important global initiatives in the water sector, including presentation of the Initiative at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002, the World Water Forum in Kyoto in March 2003, and the 12th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York in April 2004.



Lack of clean water plagues many rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana, Mali and Niger, where WAWI focuses its activities.